bliss....

She wore dark glasses, and face paint that made her normally sanguine complexion look white and metallic. Her large body was wrapped in diaphanous cloth. She smoked and talked all night, alone except when he brought her the little pill in the plastic box.

He brought it to her, with the wonderful style he'd acquired in the spas and watering-holes of Europe, the pill in its plastic casket in his left hand, the water in a little paper cup in his right.

He carefully tapped it into her palm, that opened to receive it unconsciously and naturally as a flower.

Sometimes for variety he took two pills and placed them each in a paper cup. Then he would carry the two cups in one hand, the plastic water pitcher in the other, and do two doses in one trip.

It was just sufficient to burn her synapses like hydro-electricity, without burning them out.

She was a good person. She'd wanted to believe that he was good too, but she was wrong. The voices were right. He'd hurt her too much, but no one ever saw her look better. No one ever would. It was for Svengali....

He was with a client....

*****

He saw Butch tip-toeing down Thing Street, on his way to the Godwill. He was holding someone's pinky.

It wasn't Mitzi's....

Johnny noticed. He had bad, buck teeth. A shock of blond hair, turned to ash. He nonetheless carefully combed it every morning, till it looked permed.

Seeing Johnny, he whispered something smutty in the hag's ear. If it hadn't been for Johnny, they'd have had nothing to say. He made them a lovely, happy couple.

He said it's Johnny, the disgusting faggot that's stalking my rock-solid ass. Shameful, what they let range Thing Street these days. Call it Hogtown, for a reason....

At the Godwill, there was no one. Even Glasses was away....

The best places were few, and very crummy. Even these were run by outfits for which you had to be a certified ARTISTE, according to Vixen Foxy Weasel-Theatre and the Dadanian Artist Code she copy-edited for Citizen Hearse, Charles Waldorf Handy, and the rest of that CARTEL....

Then you had to sign something, swearing that you didn't mind living with degenerates like them. You wanted to....

Suddenly, Johnny realized. Butch wasn't going to Timbuktu. Butch was an ARTISTE, under the CODE. The National Socialists had one, just like it!

Those installations he naively imagined Butch did for sheer joy of it, were entirely so he could say he'd presented his work to the PUBLIC. What work? What public? Inflatable rubber whales painted with GREENPEACE slogans, for tired matrons sitting their spawn at a wading pool in a Porkdale Parkette....